104-10096-10226

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INSPECTOR GENERAL
76-3441

OLC 76-3423

10 November 1976

JFK ACT RELEASE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Richard Sprague, Chief Counsel, House Select Committee on Assassinations

REFERENCE: Memorandum for the Record, 27 October 1976 (OLC 76-3094)

1. In follow up with the concept embodied in referent memorandum and in an effort to obtain further agreement on principles and further delineation of upcoming requirements, I made arrangements to meet with Richard Sprague. Mr. Richard Feeney, his Executive Assistant, sat in. Scott Breckinridge, Deputy Inspector General, accompanied me to the meeting.

2. I opened by explaining Mr. Breckinridge's role and background and our interest in getting a better appreciation of the type and depth of support the Committee would need from us to facilitate their inquiry. It was emphasized that such mutual sizing of our respective requirements would enable us to posture ourselves to work efficiently and effectively together. Sprague, as he had previously, appreciated the sincerity of our interests to be cooperative and the importance of getting off on the right foot.

a. Security - Sprague is in full agreement that the Committee needs a full-time professional security officer. I said the sooner the better in order to work out the minimum security requirements of the Director in light of his statutory responsibilities for sources and methods. I told him we had specific guidelines in mind and wanted to reach agreement as soon as possible but the last word I had received was that the Committee was behind in processing its personnel security clearances. Feeney is to follow-up. I also mentioned that we would want security agreements with the staff, which was acceptable.

b. Public Statements - Noting that the TV cameras had been filming Sprague prior to our meeting, I said one of the underpinnings for smooth cooperation between us would be strong discipline against leaks and public statements which could lead to press whipsawing between the Agency and the Committee. I said for our part we would not feel it appropriate to comment on the substantive aspects of the investigation.

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Sprague said he could not guarantee what the members would do but as far as he was concerned, and inferentially for the entire staff as well, there would be absolutely no public statements of the type which would detract from the professional investigation he intended to run.

c. Organization - Sprague plans on two task forces, each composed of 15 attorneys and 25 investigators augmented by a general legal staff. One of the task forces will concentrate on the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the other on Martin Luther King, Jr. The Kennedy task force leader will be Robert Tannenbaum, Chief Deputy Counsel of the Committee and a former assistant district attorney in New York City, who has handled a number of Mafia cases. Tannenbaum will be one of our key contacts on that staff and we had a short introductory meeting with him. There will also be a polygraphs and stress evaluation unit. He will have a document control unit for receipting of documents, separating them for forwarding to the separate task forces, cross-referencing, and research. The committee will also use computers. The task force leader for the King assassination will be Robert Lehner.

d. Documents and Interviews - Sprague repeated his earlier statement that he is not interested in collecting documents. I said this would enhance the security of our entire operation and invited him to Headquarters to size our collection learn how we index and handle documents so he could determine how many personnel he needed to assign for their review. He was taken by this idea. I said it was our hope that not all 40 on the Kennedy task force would need access to this material and, of course, the earlier we had a feel on this the better; it would aid in our setting up of suitable arrangements at our Headquarters building. It was agreed that we would have a session early next week and arrangements were made for Tuesday, 16 November, at 2:00 p.m. It was indicated that we would also have to make special arrangements for interviews, an area extremely important to Sprague. Sprague bristled somewhat and I asked that we defer this for now but explained that our people were bound by security agreements to the Director and in releasing them from that obligation in connection with the investigations we had a legitimate right to make arrangements to assure that sensitive information unrelated to these lines of inquiry were not disclosed (this is probably going to be one of our most difficult areas). Mr. Breckinridge elaborated on this point as it relates to documents.

e. General Attitude - Sprague continued to display a very positive attitude towards our problems, but at the same time there is no question that he intends to run as complete an investigation as possible, recognizing that in the process he will have to run down perhaps many blind alleys. His view is that this is the only way to make the effort worthwhile at all.

f. Action -

(1) There is some concern over the possibility that documents in which they are interested may be destroyed. I allayed Sprague's concern on that point and have asked Hal Bean to draft a suitable letter to Chairman Downing as well as an employee notice. It is extremely important to do this before the document destruction notice appears in the Federal Register because that notice refers only to S. Res. 21 documents and not the needs of the Committee.

(2) Make arrangements for a meeting at Headquarters which will involve Sprague, Feeney, and Donovan Gay, Director of Research for the Committee.

(3) Pull together all Agency material on King and Lee Harvey Oswald (Sprague believes we probably have small holdings in this area and it is a priority task for the Committee).

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